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7 June 1951

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Messrs. Joyce)
 Higgs)Department of State
 Campbell)

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SUBJECT: Albania

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHOD EXEMPTION 3828
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

After discussing the subject with Mr. Joyce, I met with Messrs. Higgs and Campbell of the Department of State and drew their attention to the following points:

1. The increasingly militant character of the activities of the Yugoslav-sponsored Albanian emigre organization in Yugoslavia is causing considerable excitement within the National Committee for Free Albania and in Albanian emigre circles in general. Announcement of the existence of the Yugoslav-sponsored group, over the Yugoslav radio, has made it clear that this organization was created with a view to causing the overthrow of the Hoxha regime. Furthermore, approaches made by a Yugoslav diplomat and by Albanian representatives of the Yugoslav-sponsored group to prominent Albanian refugees have made it clear to the Albanian emigration that the Yugoslavs are prepared to support a much more vigorous program than the relatively mild one which we have undertaken in the name of the Committee for Free Albania.

2. As a consequence of the attractive prospect of violent action in the near future, there is serious danger that Albanians on whom we are depending for the execution of our program will be lured to the Yugoslav cause, with the result that the NCFA will lose the support of both the leaders who are actively behind it and the general rank and file of the Albanian public outside and inside the country.

3. Yugoslav activities, as represented by the publicity given to the Yugoslav-sponsored group and by the recruiting campaign for this group, indicate that Yugoslav expressions of concern were not genuine when the Yugoslav government pointed out to the US and British Ambassadors in Belgrade that the activities of the Albanian National Committee and other groups in Albania were likely to cause Soviet intervention, and thus endanger peace in the Balkans. The Yugoslavs themselves are engaging in a far more provocative program of action than anything undertaken by ourselves or any other Western country so far.

4. In the event

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4. In the event a Yugoslav-sponsored coup d'etat takes place in Albania, it will be difficult to restrain the Greeks from taking action to protect what they consider their legitimate interests in Albania, with the result that a difficult and embarrassing situation will develop.

5. I suggested that it may be highly desirable to instruct our Ambassador in Belgrade to point out the apparent inconsistency of the Yugoslav statements made to him in regard to the danger of bringing about active Soviet intervention in Albania as a result of Western-sponsored resistance groups such as the NCFA, when the Yugoslavs themselves have permitted the creation of a far more militant organization which is openly announcing its intention to recruit a large armed force for the overthrow of the present Albanian Government. My thought in suggesting that action be taken on a diplomatic level is that it might conceivably help to clarify Yugoslav intentions and that the Yugoslav reaction might provide additional information which would help in the formulation of our policy toward Albania and our plans for immediate action in that area. I also suggested that since the two-month ban on leaflet drops over Albania has expired, it would be a good thing to resume the drops in order to maintain the prestige of the U.S.-sponsored Committee in the eyes of the Albanian population and provide some show of activity to keep up the public confidence in our group and prevent mass desertion to the Yugoslav cause because of the more attractive prospects of immediate action offered by the Yugoslav-inspired group. It was agreed by the participating members of the Department of State that it would be desirable to raise the above-mentioned point with the Yugoslav Government, and Mr. Higgs indicated that he would try to get the necessary instructions to the Ambassador as soon as possible. As regards the resumption of leaflet drops, Mr. Higgs expressed the view that it would probably be better to postpone such action until after the Yugoslav reaction to the Ambassador's approach is known, and that in the event the Yugoslav reply is unsatisfactory we could then resume leaflet drops with desirable effects not only on Albania but also on the Yugoslav Government.

6. Mr. Joyce inquired whether I thought it would be useful to raise the question of the Yugoslav-sponsored Albanian organization with General Popovic. I replied that, in view of the generally unproductive character of the Popovic talks so far, I thought it would probably be useless to bring up this point. I added that my one suggestion is that the matter be taken up through diplomatic channels in Belgrade.

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